

The University of Washington Commitment Statement in support of the National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine Action Collaborative on Preventing Sexual Harassment in Higher Education

April 8, 2019

[The National Academies report on *Sexual Harassment of Women: Climate, Culture, and Consequences in Academic Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine \(2018\)*](#) found that between 20 and 50 percent of women students and more than half of women faculty and staff experienced sexually harassing behavior while in academia. Research demonstrates that sexual harassment undermines women's professional and educational attainment and their mental and physical health. It also shows that these consequences are not limited to those experiencing it directly, but that bystanders of all genders who experience ambient harassment in their work or education environment are also affected. This in turn affects organizations as employees disengage, withdraw, and resign so as not to become the next target. The report concludes that system-wide changes to the culture and climate in higher education are needed and provides a roadmap for higher education to make these changes. In response, the University of Washington is joining a national effort with other institutions and the National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine to form an *Action Collaborative on Preventing Sexual Harassment in Higher Education*. This Action Collaborative will facilitate partnerships and joint action on addressing and preventing sexual harassment.

Our commitment begins at home. The UW is responsible for creating a culture free of sexual harassment, sexual assault and all forms of gender discrimination where every member of our community feels safe, respected and valued. As a national leader in healthcare, we have a special responsibility and capacity to promote this cultural shift. Our responsibility starts at the top, but it includes our whole community. To that end, we are making a commitment—based on the recommendations from the Title IX Steering Committee—to expand training and education to every member of the UW community in a way that is engaging, ongoing, focuses on prevention and response, and is intersectional in its approach. In pursuit of this goal, we will strengthen our commitment to ensuring every member of our community is aware of the resources available for reporting or addressing harassing, violent, or retaliatory behavior.

More broadly, in collaboration with the other members of the Action Collaborative, we aim to achieve targeted, collective action to advance evidence-based policies and practices at the individual and systems levels for addressing and preventing all forms of sexual harassment and promoting a culture of civility and respect. The four goals of the Action Collaborative are:

- Raise awareness about sexual harassment, how it occurs, its consequences, and the organizational characteristics and recommended approaches that can prevent it.
- Share and elevate evidence-based institutional policies and strategies to reduce and prevent sexual harassment.
- Contribute to setting the research agenda, and gather and apply research results across institutions.
- Develop a standard for measuring progress toward reducing and preventing sexual harassment in higher education.

The University of Washington hereby commits to support the goals of the National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine *Action Collaborative on Preventing Sexual Harassment in Higher Education*.